

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CARACA 01927 281617Z
ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1361

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 1927

FOR A/SY/PRS/FD AND ARA/AND/V

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC ENRG VE
SUBJECT: PERSONAL SECURITY OF VISITING MINISTER OF ENERGY

REF: CARACAS 1852

1. MINISTER OF ENERGY VAENTIN HERNANDEZ HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN TO THE AMBASSADOR ABOUT HIS PERSONAL SECURITY WHILE HE IS IN THE US THE WEEK OF MARCH 5-9 AS A RESULT OF THREATS MADE BY CUBAN EXILE GROUPS AGAINST GOV OFFICIALS AND TERRORIST ACTIONS BY THESE GROUPS AGAINST VENEZUELAN OFFICES IN THE US. HE ASKED IF THE DEPARTMENT COULD PROVIDE OR ARRANGE FOR SOME FORM OF PERSONAL PROTECTION TO HIM WHILE HE IS IN THE US. HE SEEMED PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PERIOD HE WILL BE IN NEW YORK, ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT THAT PORTION OF HIS TRIP WOULD NOT BE PUBLICIZED. THE MINISTER WILL HEAD A GROUP OF FOUR TO SIX GOV OFFICIALS.

2. THE MINISTER'S TENTATIVE SCHEDULE IS AS FOLLOWS:
MARCH 5- TRAVEL FROM CARACAS TO NEW YORK VIA PANAM.
TRAVEL ON TO WASHINGTON SAME DAY. WILL STAY AT MADISON HOTEL WHILE IN WASHINGTON. THE MINISTER'S STAY IN WASHINGTON IS BEING COORDINATED BY THE
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PAGE 02 CARACA 01927 281617Z

VENEZUELAN EMBASSY.
MARCH 6- MEETING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, AND POSSIBLY IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY.
MARCH 7 TRAVEL FROM WASHINGTON TO NEW YORK, PROBABLY BY TRAIN. STAY AT CARLISLE HOTEL IN A SUITE PERMANENTLY RESERVED BY NEW YORK OFFICE OF PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA.

SCHEDULE IN NEW YORK IS BEING COORDINATED BY MR QUINONES, VENEZUELAN CONSUL THERE. IN NEW YORK, THE MINISTER EXPECTS TO MEET WITH VARIOUS BUSINESSMEN, INCLUDING MR SIRO (SP?) VASQUEZ, A PERSONAL FRIEND WHO IS A FORMERDIRECTOR OF THE EXXON CORPORATION, AND TO UNDERGO A MEDICAL CHECKUP. THE MINISTER WILL PROBABLY LEAVE NEW YORK FOR CARACAS ON OR ABOUT MARCH 9.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO PROVIDE MINISTER HERNANDEZ WHATEVER ASSISTANCE IS APPROPRIATE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. AS WE UNDERSTAND, HE IS ALSO CHECKING WITH THE VENEZUELAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND THE CONSULATE IN NEW YORK ON THIS QUESTION. VENEZUELAN OFFICIALS TAKE SERIOUSLY THE THREATS MADE BY CUBAN GROUPS, PARTICULARLY THOSE OF THE CORU GROUP HEADED BY ORLANDO BOSCH, WHO IS CURRENTLY JAILED HERE AS A RESULT OF THE BOMBING OF A CUBANA AIRLINES PLANE IN 1976.
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